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*Which sports tourism?
The makings of a contemporary
experience of the elsewhere
&
2nd CERCE day
Anthropology of sports*

4, 5 et 6 July 2018
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CALL FOR PAPERS

WHICH SPORTS TOURISM?

The makings of a contemporary experience of the elsewhere

The society of production is giving way to a consumer society in which leisure activities are gaining in popularity. Free time thus tends to turn into time which is used to groom one's body, and the « civilization of leisure » generates its own culture (Dumazedier, 1964). In this way, sports as a form of leisure hold a particular place within our society. The “sportivization” of society, from a cultural and economic aspect, generates an expansion and a renewal of the different types of sporting leisure activities (increase in the number of sporting practices and diversification of the sporting techniques' employed), following recreational (Corneloup, 2011) or body-oriented (Rauch, 1988) goals, but also connecting with the environment, whether it be urban or natural.

The universe of sporting activities, combining destination places and motor, recreational and cultural activities, blends with travel experience; the melting pot which characterizes sports tourism. Pigeassou defines sports tourism as moving towards « a destination (which organizes a space-time), selected to participate in events typical of the leisure sports culture understood as an expression of a physical activity and/or cultural demonstrations » (2000). In this case, who is a sports tourist? Who is a sports traveler? Does this recurring opposition (Urbain, 1991) even still have a meaning in the universe of sports (Sobry, 2016)?

« In a reputedly comfortable society, adventure is in the spirit of the times. (...) Its new configuration and its influence on sports practicing and touristic leisure are considerable» (Pociello, 1987). However, various touristic tendencies which call upon leisure sports are being organized and oppose each other in order to offer an answer to the new ways of thinking and living the here and the elsewhere.

On the one side, adventure has always stimulated people's imagination through stories. The image of the adventurer is often associated with that of the explorer risking his life to travel the globe in search of undiscovered places. In this way, there is a demand and a commercial offer for adventure-themed trips. Commercial expeditions are « a form of leisure and holiday where themes, including the notion of risk and programmed unexpectedness, are at play » (Ehrenberg, 1991). Next generation adventurers will chose a destination conducive to the practice of sometimes extreme activities. These tourists declare to be in search of risky situations which they can't find in contemporary societies that are too aseptic (Barthelemy, 2002). Adventure tourism has become a « market of the extreme, aiming to jeopardize the individual in his purely personal expression » (Ehrenberg, 1991). Such an engagement of the body (Routier & Soulé, 2012), going sometimes as far as extreme risk-taking, forces interrogation.

On the other side, « contemplative » and/or green tourism is developing so as to take the time to create « an intimate sensoriality with nature and culture » (Bourdeau, 1994). It is in this view that emerge new exploration modes, such as *slow tourism* which consists in choosing the least polluting means of transportation (bicycle, gipsy caravan, horseback, sailing boats...) in an attempt to escape a consumer society judged to be too invasive. The tourist's print is minimized. All these behaviors are figured in order for the tourist to commune with what he sees (Corneloup, 2011). « Nature is reaffirmed as a major cultural and ideological reference point for urban civilizations» (Bourdeau, 1994). However, even if the

tourism logic presented here is essentially contemplative and/or responsible, it remains no less engaging for discovering new horizons and creating a form of personal adventures. This adventure is sometimes amplified: in a wish to make one with nature, the anchorite hermit takes refuge in a cavern, in a wooden cabin in Walden for Thoreau (2008), in a canyon of the Sierra for John Muir (2011) or in Siberia for Sylvain Tesson (2011). The process of locking-in in the middle of nature intensifies the immersion effect. In the alien environment of the desert, nomadism crosses with all its continental mobility: thus, travelling *full-timers* « domesticate a wild territory » (Forget, 2012). In his cosmo-poetic laboratory, Kenneth White (2007) finds in Rimbaud, Gauguin and Victor Segalen « the Finisterre [*end of earth*] of the spirit » as so many temptations to overcome the Occident in a still colonial Orientalism. We can thus understand Ehrenberg's words when he states that « progress worries us and the desert reassures us » (1991).

All these ways of living and of perceiving sports tourism are linked to contemporary values of an imaginary in which adventure, in its widest and most diversified acceptance, is at the center of a quest for reenchanting both what is close and what is distant. Could the creation of sports tourism be a form of resistance in the face of contemporary society, that is to say a (fun and respectful) way of reclaiming the environment, of making it more livable and, through all this, of being more mindful of our own health?

THEMES

Theme 1 - Sporting practices through the prism of tourist activities?

Sports, such as we know them nowadays, in the same way as tourist activities, were developed in parallel in the wake of the emergence of the industrial society in the 19th century (Guttman, 1978; Veblen, 1899). However, it is only in the second half of the 20th century that these two types of activity converged into the category of sports tourism, giving birth to new practices, or at least taking on new shapes and meanings for those who partake in them (Glyptis, 1982; Pigeassou, 1997; Gibson, 1998). Although, throughout these past decades, social sciences have begun to develop fields of study surrounding sports (Bromberger, 1995) and tourism (Cousin, 2016), they have still only barely begun to combine the two in order to question the practices that can be found at the crossroads of these two fields.

It would however seem worthwhile to look into analyzing these instances in order to supplement our knowledge concerning sports, tourism and, by extension, leisure activities. This first theme thus finds its place as a continuation of a workshop, named « Around sports », which was organized by the University of Montpellier 3 in April 2017. The aim in this was to identify the logic behind the transformations of the practices under study and to understand the stakes of a conformation to the sporting model (Darbon, 2012) or, on the contrary, of a resistance to this process, going maybe even so far as a desportivization as a radical way to reclaim practices in order to make them fit in with other ends (Soldani, 2015).

Here, we propose to reflect upon the categories of sports and tourism through practices relating, for participants or for observers, to sports tourism, without however seeking to impose a normative grid which would exclude certain activities or would categorize them in too rigid a manner, following arbitrary criteria. Communications can thus question the limits of these concepts through exploring what can be touristic in sports or, conversely, sporting in tourism – in the same way as contributors to the thematic double issue of the Journal du

MAUSS dedicated to games and sports (2015) questioned the dimension of fun remaining in sporting practices. Is sports tourism radically different from other forms of tourism? If it is, then in what way? Is it compatible with other approaches to tourism? Do sports which are practiced in this framework retain their competitive dimension (agonistic) which defines them in other contexts? What meaning does the transposition of certain practices into the field of tourism have for the participants?

This theoretic dimension is however not the only one concerned by this theme. Empirical case studies, more specifically those bearing on original and fine descriptions of practices, are used here in order to shed light on the uses, old and new, which define this type of leisure and so which is, *in fine*, sports tourism. Through this, the aim is to set aside an excessively overbearing or macrosociologic vision of these elements in order to broach them in a more moderate way, speaking not of what they should be, but of how they are set up by practitioners and how the latter represent their own activities or the show that they are witnessing. The goal will therefore be to compare the practices with the norm, to understand the strategies unfolded by the participants in order to reclaim, or even redirect, the activities in which they are engaged and to exchange amongst themselves their different ways of doing things (De Certeau, 1980). Equally, the goal is also to question what sports leisure activities do to people, asking the question of gender, but also of health in the choice of an activity. Is sports tourism an identity marker or one of belonging? Are the variations in the practices linked to disagreements between the participants, or do they rather reflect a transformation or reclaiming process which is still ongoing?

Finally, an exploration of the methodology aspects, mainly in data collection, will be expected. *In situ* observing (Beldame & Perera, 2016), enables to grasp how leisure practices organize and reorganize new ways of life, opening the question of meaning, of the creation of tastes and distastes (Raveneau *et al.*, 2011)..

Theme 2 - Body, image, well-being and innovation

Touristic adventure, including sporting leisure activities, has become a communication project where everyone wants to keep a trace of their travels so as to be able to tell the story of everything they have lived, proof at hand. Sporting experiences take on a material shape through the use of a GoPro (Le Breton, 1991; Andrieu, 2015) or of a mobile phone (using many accessories). « The hotspots for danger, even if located on the other side of the world, rapidly become the supermarkets of adventure » (Le Breton, 1991). The interactions which result from this, made of shared emotions, allow approaching the environment in a different way, even to the extent of making the practice of sporting leisure activities evolve. The relation that sets in place relates to an experience based on the amplification of emotions, of showcasing one's own body, but not just any old way...

Indeed, the ideal body, which consists in being fit and toned, a synonym for health, began being used as a reference point since the advent of leisure activities (Queval, 2008). The body is shown and unveiled, under the combined influence of fashion and seaside tourism. The evolution of the look of bathing suits is an indicator of the place given to the body. For instance, even if the « bikini » launched by Louis Réaud in 1946 caused scandal (Sohn, 2006), it is nowadays globally admitted on the beaches. The body is no longer hidden as it was at the beginning of the 19th century, rather it is exhibited and shown off. We are truly witnessing a liberation of the body since the 1960s. The body is presented as a « vehicle of pleasure » (Featherstone *et al.*, 1991), and the more it fits with the idealized images of youth,

health, fitness and beauty, the higher its exchange value is. Ironically, the body's liberation imposes an effort and a continuous surveillance of eating habits.

From a hidden body, we thus move on to a shown and liberated body, but one that also imposes a new self-discipline. Cultivating the « athletic » body becomes the most popular and the most important leisure of the moment. A whole new market is developed (Bessy, 1987), often called the « aerobics wave ». Within the « consumer culture », physical exercise and diets have become marketing « products ». The ideal body becomes a « stereotypical consumer object » which influences our existence. Commercialized and proposed in a range of forms, the means to exert a control over the body enjoy a meteoric rise. The body landscape, as a real market, rests on composable and recomposable models, which are however governed by strong main lines: thinness, tone, youthful features, apparent « good health », which sum up the « sportivization » of the body. Is attempting to reach this ideal shape the meaning of sports tourism? All in all, might sports tourism be the extension of the aerobics wave, but projected elsewhere? In what measure does the commercialized extreme adventure or contemplation turn into an ideal body management and exhibition leisure activity?

Theme 3 – Risk, security and accessibility

At the moment, the goal is quite often to exceed mass tourism in order to get closer to a more authentic experience in which self-conquest or the relationship with nature takes priority (Ehrenberg, 1991). « We want to feel existence beating within us » (Le Breton, 1991). To live an adventure that is out of the common is becoming more and more accessible to everybody, opening spaces (close or far away) which are both equipped and controlled by approved dispositions. The notion of the « extreme » is particularly subjective (McIntyre, Roggenbruck, 1998, Bessy, 2005, Soulé, 2008), since security plays a large role in the impression of taking risks. « Caution is often the best assistant to risk » (Le Breton, 1991). According to Bourdeau, risk is not limited to natural spaces, but extends to all the elements related to the exoticism inherent to adventure travelling: political and economical instability, or even the health hazard. For this author, the important element is to get « a taste of the exoticism of an advanced social disorganization » (1994).

Many Tour-Operators (TO) have for instance invested the market and commercialize many packages on the theme of adventure, going from meeting local populations to practicing sports that are harmonious with nature. Risk is an integral part of these types of travelling packages, but it is measured and channeled by the TO. However, buyers do not appreciate too much control as it gives the impression of a lessened quality of the experience (Ladwein, 2005). Nevertheless, TO are not allowed to make their clients run any real risks: the aim is to create a climate conducive to a feeling that the experience may have a hazardous outcome and thus, that it is adventurous (Barthelemy, 2002).

The creation of new forms of TO can also be seen, participative (Guest2guest, airbnb, meet to travel...), which develop a kind of community tourism of « co holidays ». How does this give a different meaning to adventure?

Other environments, close or distant (mountains, seaside resorts, rural or urban spaces), offer opportunities for practicing sporting leisure activities which are both sustainable and increasingly accessible. Getting away through the practice of sports is more and more controlled, through the application of security norms, but also through the establishment of quality labels. The field of disability is significant in this subject, implying specific equipment and supervision. These material and human dispositions, which are claimed by certain social

institutions and backed at the ministry level, make sporting leisure activities accessible, but also open the question of this population's uses and inclusion.

Theme 4 – Impact, territory and touristicity

Organizing small or large sporting events, the financial help and incentive to construct leisure sporting facilities and the promotion of sporting culture, are potential strategic assets which can have an economic and social impact on a given territory, but which can also have an impact on the media, politics or even urbanism, and which deserve our attention. Sports tourism can thus participate in making territories attractive, enhancing their « production » (Guibert, 2015). Depending on the object of the investigation, different levels of space can be perceived: local, regional, inter-regional, national, international ... In this sense, we can speak of a touristicity that is proper to a territory which is seen as the « relation between competitiveness and endowment in the field of tourist attraction on the one hand, and a relation between competitiveness and the aptitude of the territory's stakeholders to cooperate on the other hand » (Botti et Peypoch, 2012). *In fine*, it is the identity of a territory which is at play in the way in which the structures and infrastructures pertaining to sports practices are managed, without forgetting the administration of natural heritage (seaside, mountains and rural). Thus, « the touristicity of a territory is the combination of various parameters which allow the evaluation of the notoriety and the position of this territory within the development of the touristic phenomenon » (Théodat, 2004).

It is in this sense that taking over the management of sports and sporting events could become a means to promote a territory, offering a potential tourist attraction, but also generating a competition between the different territories. How is a « reversed touristicity » organized, symbolizing the opposition between two territories? In what way does sports tourism durably establish the identity of a territory, or even transforms it? How can the imaginary be a real vector of touristicity, leading visitors to places which were previously idealized? In addition, it is also possible to question, alongside these spatial considerations, the different temporalities in which sports tourism can take place. Is sports tourism linked to seasons? In what can this be different from other forms of tourism or other forms of sports activities? Are sports, in certain cases, a way of diversifying the offer of activities proposed during certain seasons and thus are they a way of rebalancing the touristic flux throughout the year?

Certain authors, for instance, have shown that in the definitions of tourism and of the tourist, the excursionist, an important consumer in certain cases, does not hold a place. However, 40% of French people do not go off on holiday (Cousin & Réau, 2016). This is because the duration of the stay is determining in the distinction between the tourist (more than 24 hours) and the excursionist (less than 24 hours). Cazes (1992) considers distance and duration to be « limiting factors » that cannot totally account for a touristic activity if certain definitions are applied. The economic reality could orient a new definition promoting touristic consumption over the duration of the stay. With this in mind, excursionists should become elements of touristic activity in their own right (Mamontoff & Hoerner, 2009). Finally, how could this accounting logic reveal new ways of consuming sports tourism and, consequently, reveal new strategies for planning sporting leisure activities?

INSTRUCTIONS FOR SUBMITTERS

Communications can be presented as **oral communications (20 minutes and 10 minutes of discussion)**. The conditions for submitting to the workshops are the same as for communications.

The official languages of the symposium are French and English.

The communication propositions must be submitted before: **15th January 2018**.

The submitted abstract must comply with the following format:

Title of the proposition, (Times, 12, flush-left)

Author(s)'s name(s), address (Times, 12, flush-left)

Abstract of 300 words maximum (Times, 12, justified).

Keywords: 5 keywords detailing precisely the themes and the scientific fields concerned.

To submit, please send to the following email address: eric.perera@umontpellier.fr

Information: <http://www.santesih.fr/index.php/congres-tourisme-sportif-2018/appe-a-communications-2>

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The « Tourisme Sportif [Sports Tourism] » congress will take place on **4, 5 and 6th July 2018** at the espace **Saint Charles 2 of the University Paul Valéry of Montpellier 3**. It is organized by SantESiH (Santé Education Situations de Handicap [Health Education Disability Situations], EA 2516, University of Montpellier) and by the LERSEM-CERCE (Centre d'Etudes et de Recherches Comparatives en Ethnologie [Comparative Study and Research Center for Ethnology], EA 3532, University Paul-Valéry Montpellier 3).

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